

Society of Enquiry of  
Union Theo Seminary

ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

PHILO AND FRANKLIN LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

JEFFERSON COLLEGE,

AT THE

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ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT, SEPT. 29th, 1842.

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BY

LEWIS W. GREEN,

Professor of Biblical Literature in the Western Theological Seminary.

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY A. JAYNES, FRANKLIN HEAD, THIRD STREET.

1842.

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TEACHERS  
THOMAS JAMES JOSEPH MORSE  
DANIEL BENJAMIN BROWN

*Jefferson College, Sept. 29, 1842.*

REV. SIR:—It was with feelings of the highest gratification, that we listened to the truly eloquent Address which you have just delivered.

Permit us to return you the thanks of the Societies which we represent, and to request a copy of the Address, for publication.

Respectfully Yours:

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ULYSSES MERCUR, | J. W. SULLIVAN, |
| JAS. MATTHEWS,  | D. C. BOAL,     |
| AND'W. COCHRAN, | K. WHARTON,     |

*Committee Philo Society.*

*Com. Franklin Society.*

PROF. L. W. GREEN.

GENTLEMEN:—The Address, of which you request a copy, was originally prepared with direct reference to your anniversary,—and, on a subsequent application, delivered before one of the Societies of Miami University.

Should you deem it worthy of circulation, it is cheerfully placed at your disposal.

With a grateful sense of the honor conferred upon me,

I Remain Your Obedient Servant:

L. W. GREEN.

MESSRS. MERCUR, MATTHEWS, SULLIVAN, &c.

## A D D R E S S .

PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT, are God's *universal law*. Or, if there be any one in this assembly, who would murmur darkly, with "the fool in his heart, that there is no God," then will we accommodate our language to the madness of his philosophy, too, and say, *progress and development* are the *universal law* of Nature. To whatever quarter of the universe we direct our attention, we behold the evidence of its existence and operation. In the vegetable and animal kingdom,—in the rational and irrational creation,—on the earth's surface and in its hidden depths,—and if recent speculation have not led her votaries very far astray, even in those boundless regions of immeasurable space, which the unaided eye of man hath never penetrated yet, and the mightiest telescopes have *but half* revealed to the wonder of our modern astronomy. The *full grown* oak, is but the matured development of the *germ* from which it sprang; and whether suddenly uprooted by the storm, or returning by slow decay to the bosom of the earth, its mouldering elements are but the commencement and the support of an ever renovating life, nourishing successively, the flower, the grass, the herds, and finally, the husbandman himself; thus, alike in its growth and its decay, subserving the purposes of God, and furthering the universal progress.

There is profound and essential truth in that verbal paradox, which, reversing apparently the laws of nature, assures us, that "the boy is the father of the man;" for indeed his whole future life, with all its chequered scenery of grandeur and of meanness,—of energy and weakness,—of ambition, enterprise, passion, tenderness, are but the developments of his earlier intellectual and moral nature; the successive exhibitions, under varied circumstances, of those original elements of character, which had slumbered from the first, unseen, because undeveloped, in his bosom. Nay, the great globe itself on which we live, exhibits, on its surface and within its bosom, indisputable evidence of successive revolutions, stretching through incalculable ages; revolutions which *appeared* to be destruction, yet *really* adapted it, successively, for its successive orders of inhabitants, and prepared it ultimately for the abode of man; to experience hereafter, *at least one other* sublime and terrific, yet glorious transformation, when the purposes of the present economy shall have been accomplished, and the economy itself, like those that have gone before it, finally wound up, amidst the consuming fires of that mighty conflagration, from which shall arise, in purified and renovated beauty, "the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" the glorious abode prepared for higher and purer intelligences. And if that nebular hypothesis be true, which first was a mere conjecture, vague and indistinct as the nebulae it was designed to explain,—then, appeared an ingenious and plausible hypothesis,—and now, seems gradually, yet rapidly, assuming the consistency of a probable theory; if this hypothesis be true, which con-

siders the luminous tracks dimly discernible in the sky, not as the blended radiance of innumerable stars, indistinguishable by reason of their distance, but as immense regions of luminous matter—here, spread thinly over space—there, accumulating into regular masses, probably conglomerating into worlds; then do we behold, in the heavens above us, the same law that we have noticed in the earth and its inhabitants. And even now, in other parts of his dominions, and beneath the observation of our telescopes, is the Creator carrying on the same mighty process of a progressive development, by which he has prepared the earth itself and each of the inhabitants upon its surface, to fill its appropriate place, and accomplish its destined purpose. But if this should be rejected as a speculation too intolerably bold, so much, at least, must be conceded to the spirit of *scientific* and not *fanciful inquiry*—to the results of repeated, and sober, and indubitable observation—that no atom, globe or system, exists there only for itself; that system is indefinitely, at least, if not infinitely, linked with system; and that, besides the several movements necessary for their individual preservation, each is progressing majestically on in that mighty march in which the universe is moving around some distant centre, to some sublime and final consummation. May we not pause here, in the progress of our remarks, and give this as the result of all our previous observation, that wherever we look,—above, beneath, around, within us—on the animated or inanimate creation—on Nature, in her individuals or aggregates—in her minutest particles or mightiest masses, we behold, in each, a design beyond itself; ulterior relations manifold and

undeniable; mysterious tendencies towards some remoter end; a scheme not yet fully developed; a goal not yet reached; an ultimate purpose yet unattained? The universe is not a fortuitous concourse of independent atoms, but a mighty whole, whose separate parts are mutually related, and reciprocally dependent, and which derive their chief value, and even their most essential qualities, from these relations of each to the other, and of all to the mighty whole. Now that which is true in nature, is likewise true in man; that which is true in the individual, is true likewise of the species. Nor can we believe that the events daily transpiring around us, are unrelated or disconnected occurrences—a blind chaos of irregular forces, dashing against and jostling each other. Amidst all their apparent and temporary conflict, there is real and enduring harmony—the regular march of one all-embracing plan,—the slow approximation towards that ultimate result which HE hath purposed, “who, in wisdom, made them all,” and as *kindly* as *powerfully* subordinates each to all, and all unto himself. History, then, is not a mere array of disconnected facts—of effects without a cause—of events without a law—but truly a *science*, and like every other science, conversant indeed with facts, but with facts only, as they indicate universal laws; that have operated in the past, and will operate in the future; the *science of human nature, of human progress and development*; or, in other words, of *God's purpose*, so far as it can be discerned by human reason, respecting the progressive advancement and final destiny of the species. To trace the thread which will guide us through the great labyrinth of human affairs; to dis-

cover the principle which will bind together the scattered fragments of Universal History, and harmonize its apparently discordant elements, into one grand and connected system; to ascertain the real point towards which, amidst apparent or partial aberrations, the whole grand scheme is tending; this is the arduous effort, and so far as human intellect can accomplish it, the highest duty of a true philosophy of history. And they who have most widely read, most deeply pondered, most accurately and minutely scrutinized the annals of the human race, have perceived most clearly that history is, indeed, the record of events, intimately and indissolubly related to each other; that each individual is connected with, and operates upon, his age and nation; each nation on all its immediate contemporaries; and each successive age receives an influence from the past, which it transmits, variously modified by its own peculiar character and circumstances, not only to the next but to all succeeding generations, thus presenting in the moral universe, the same august and imposing spectacle which we behold in creation around, of one grand and comprehensive system, with all its component parts moving majestically on, step by step, amidst apparent and temporary retrogression, towards its ultimate and assured result.

We are well aware, that infidel historians often admit the fact, yet misconceive the meaning,—painfully trace out the connection, yet pervert the principle,—attribute to a blind fatality, the arrangements of infinite wisdom, and deny the *God in history*; because he rules by *laws*. But so they do in nature. They deify alternately **FATE** and **CHANCE**, or make the universe

their god. But shall we, therefore, strip God of his attributes, and rob the world of its Father? Oh no! there is a God in history, as elsewhere. This is not "a mighty maze, and all without a plan," more than any other part of his dominions; but *over all* and *in all*, he presides, and presides *in all alike*, still employing and controlling the laws of nature, to accomplish his own wise and beneficent designs; and guiding the course of history, so that each nation shall occupy "the bounds of its prescribed habitation," and fulfil its destined work—then pass away, leaving its knowledge to instruct, and its very vices and sufferings to warn mankind. This truth we easily perceive and readily admit, when applied to the ancient Jews, yet hesitate to allow its application to other races, created by the same God, placed in the same world, and employed and guided by the same omniscient and omnipotent Providence. That this extraordinary people *did* occupy an important place, and exert a decisive influence over the destinies of the world, is matter of divine revelation; and, even without this testimony, is too manifest to be denied. That christianity in more modern times, has exerted a still wider and more beneficent influence over human affairs, is yet more apparent. But who can fail to perceive that Athens and Rome, Egypt and India, have likewise, in their turn, operated widely on the destiny of the human race, and are essentially connected with the progress of human affairs? Strike indeed from the history of the world, the miraculous teachings of the law and the prophets, and the still clearer and sublimer revelations of the gospel, and you have dashed the sun from the firmament of history, and

wrapped the world in darkness. Now, erase from the records of the past, all the remains of ancient civilization—have you not blotted out the stars of the sky, which pour, at least, a dim and melancholy radiance from afar, over the dark night of heathenism? Or, if not luminaries of the heaven, may we not say, at least, that they served to embellish the earth, and have left much behind, that could ill be spared from our modern improvement? Shall we acknowledge in the one case, the manifest connection with the great scheme of human improvement, because it is written in the Bible; and deny it in the other, though written on every page of modern history—though imbedded in the very frame of human society for the last thousand years—intertwoven with the very elements of thought, and even the instrument of thought itself?

But if indeed each nation, and each successive age, has its own place to occupy; its especial duty to perform; its appropriate destiny to meet; its peculiar work to do, *freely, voluntarily*, yet by all means to do it; if, amidst all human imperfections, the great scheme of human progress and improvement is still under divine guidance, assuredly going on to its final and inevitable accomplishment, it cannot be presumptuous for us, of the present day, modestly to inquire, what point we have reached in that onward progress; what link we form in the long chain of being; what duty, what destiny, what conflicts, sufferings, defeats, victories, await us in the future. For this purpose, let us cast a rapid glance over the progress of the past, and, omitting the more ancient forms of society, commence with *that*, which is *truly* the *origin* and most *essential element*

*of modern civilization*—I mean the *introduction of Christianity*. This was most obviously a new element, thrown into the current of human improvement, by that Eternal Wisdom which had superintended the whole from its commencement, throughout all its progress; adapted indeed in its day, to the state of human advancement, as the Jewish had been in its own, yet not developed from it, nor traceable, by the most refined and learned ingenuity, to any known form of thought or opinion extant. Already, the subtlety of Grecian genius, and the practical wisdom of the Roman understanding, had done their utmost; the former, in the department of philosophy and the fine arts; the latter, in polities and government and laws—in the science of public and private life. The keen, clear, common sense of Socrates; the towering and imaginative intellect of Plato; the gifted mind of Aristotle, at once comprehensive and analytic; seemed to have left little possible for Grecian intellect to accomplish. The Stoic had appealed to the dignity of human virtue; the Epicurean, to the luxury of quiet enjoyment; the Academician, to the narrow limits of human knowledge; and the results of all their speculations had been transplanted into the Roman mind, there to take root in a new soil, and enjoy a new cultivation. How thoroughly they had exhausted all possible forms of thought, is manifest from this—that scarcely one theory of mind or morals, one motive to action, or rule of conduct, (apart from the revelation of the Bible,) has been proposed in modern times, which cannot be traced, in its origin and its happiest development, to these ancient speculations. Yet, in solving the great problem of hu-

man destiny; in satisfying the deepest necessities of the human heart; in reaching and guiding aright, the mightiest springs of human action; in accomplishing the great work of man's highest intellectual and moral improvement, they had failed—failed not without an effort—not without many bright exhibitions of individual and partial excellence; failed *splendidly, magnificently, gloriously*,—if you please,—yet *signally, totally* failed! Even the Mosaic economy, revealed by paternal wisdom to the childhood of the race, with its symbolic language addressed to the eye, and its solemn and imposing ritual appealing to the imagination and all the senses; with its priesthood, its temple, and its offerings, the types and “shadows of good things to come,” had done its work, had accomplished its mission, had already “waxed old and was ready to vanish.” How important and how sublime this mission was,—how incalculable the blessings thereby communicated to mankind, let him decide, who has learned how widely through all nations, under this symbolic garb, were diffused the most essential truths; who *has felt* what a far different and sublimer thing, is the voice of the old Hebrew prophet, as it peals down upon us through the lapse of many centuries, from the polished and philosophic eloquence of Greece and Rome; who is able to recognize *in it* the undeveloped germ, of which christianity is the full-grown tree, and *all that is best* in our present social condition, the as yet, but half-ripened fruit. Yet, divine in its origin, sublime in its vocation, beneficent in its influence, it must needs yield, along with its contemporary systems, to the new and higher influence which was about to descend upon

mankind. A new element of hope, and truth, and consolation, must be poured into the stagnant and putrid waters of human society, and even a New Race must be prepared to receive and profit by it; for the Greek, the Roman, and the Jew, are *alike* hopelessly corrupt and degenerate. The Northern barbarian must pour down upon the Roman empire, and bury beneath the tide of that overwhelming incursion, the vices and the wealth, the knowledge and the luxuries, of a race rotten to the core. Yet not at once, lest the benefit of their experience be lost! Let their knowledge and their ignorance, their truth and their error, be alike preserved, as *beacons* or as *guides* to others. If christianity cannot revive the dying body, she may, at least, embalm whatever has not putrefied; may wrap it in her own costly spices, and lay it safely away in her own new sepulchre, to be brought forth and used again, when the inundation has subsided.

We have said that christianity was a new element, introduced into human society, and an element of mighty efficacy too, filled with all the highest and widest truths; with all the principles of perpetuity and progress; destined to revolutionize and purify the world, not by a sudden and magical process, regardless of all the known laws of human nature, but by the gradual progress of light and truth, beneath the powerful guidance of a supernatural Providence. Yet, it was not the only element; and while its own essential character must remain eternally the same, yet its practical influence must (without a perpetual miracle) be variously modified by the condition of society, and the character of the age. The impulse which it shall ac-

tually communicate to the general mind, must ever be the compound result of the various forces which, co-operating with, or counteracting its influence, move on in the same general direction, or cross its path, or directly oppose its progress. The light which has streamed upon us from heaven, is in itself, essential brightness, and essential purity; yet, as viewed by different individuals, and in different ages, is variously refracted and reflected, according to the medium through which it passes, or the condition of the individual optics on which it falls. *Subjective* and *objective christianity*, are very different. The one is christianity as we may behold it every day in society around us; as we might have seen it in *Athens*, or *Corinth*, or *Alexandria*, centuries ago; or in the present day, marred and distorted by the superstitions of Papal Rome. The other is pure and unmixed truth and beauty, as it beams from the page of inspiration, or from the countenance and life of its divine Author. Now, when christianity was first published to mankind, in Rome, the mistress and centre of the civilized world, all possible opinions had met, and first neutralized; then blended with each other. The influx of the world's wealth, luxury and vices, had destroyed all morals; of the world's religions and philosophies, had *really* eradicated all belief and opinion. But scepticism is mere vacuity, or *at best*, stagnation; and the human heart requires a resting place, and the human mind a belief. The various opinions, uniting against christianity as the common foe, harmoniously blended into one. The Grecian Platonism traced back its early descent to the ancient philosophies of Egypt and India, from which alike

Pythagoras, and Plato, had drawn their fundamental doctrines; asserted a common origin, a common relationship, and a common interest; and the scepticism which had rejected all, because each contained some element of error, now greedily adopted all, because *in each* there was some apparent truth; and thus, an Oriental Philosophy, in its various forms—emanative and dualistic—shadowing vaguely, insensibly, yet by a *logical necessity*, into Pantheism; springing from a vain effort to explain the origin of evil, and terminating where it had commenced, in utter ignorance, and ultimate denial of the *very evil* it attempted to explain, became the established philosophy of mankind. Hence the first great era of our modern history, is this new element of christian truth, struggling to pervade and purify that mass of moral corruption; to *harmonize* with itself, or to *subjugate*, that strange jumble of all possible opinions, which marked the latter days of the Roman empire, and the Roman and Grecian civilization.

How essential for every intelligent glance into the future; how pregnant with great, seminal and salient truths, in the philosophy of history and social progress, is the intense and comprehensive study of this first era, and a knowledge of all its elements of power and progressive development; is manifest from the fact, that many of the institutions, most *widely* diffused, and powerfully influential in the christian world, and of the *tendencies* most dangerous now *reviving* in our age, are the offspring of this first great struggle, and of the mystic philosophy then established in the world. The modern monk is the lineal descendant of the old Egyptian Therapeutæ; and all his monastic institutions, with

nunneries, celibacy of the clergy, and self-inflicted penance, are but the necessary products of that same *wide-spread* philosophy, which, extending from the Yellow Sea, and the coasts of farther India, to the Mediterranean; and, in its Western progress, deeply tinging *all* the philosophies of *Greece*, had led the ancient Gymnosophist and Essene,—the Faquir and the Dervish,—the Therapeuta and the Monk,—to abandon the duties of life, that he might escape its temptations, and substitute outward sufferings for inward holiness; of that absurd philosophy which, mistaking altogether the nature of virtue, as an attribute of our *moral* being only, and confounding all moral and physical distinctions, teaches, that matter is essentially evil, and that the soul polluted by its contact, can regain her lost purity only by renouncing the connection. Was it the shrewd suggestion of a sagacious observer, or the prophetic instinct of a deeply philosophic mind, when about twenty years ago, in his great work on the Natural History of Enthusiasm, the writer, who, of all modern Englishmen, has most deeply studied the history of the past, and most keenly analyzed the *human heart*, predicted the easy revival of monastic principles, and a mystical, ascetic piety in England? And is it not a sign of the times, at once ominous and encouraging,—*ominous*, for the immediate present,—*encouraging*, for a *more distant future*, that this revival of a mystic piety amongst the christians of England, should synchronise so precisely with the corresponding revival of an eclectic Pantheism amongst the infidels of Germany and France? What means this strange coincidence?—Does it not indicate, at least, that they have a common

origin, and shall have a common end? That both, *baptized and unbaptized*, are children of the same Pagan philosophy; sprung from the same false tendencies of the intellect and the heart? This is no new phenomenon in the history of the human mind; for it is the destiny of error still, to revolve forever in a circle, and at each successive revolution return to the same point, and exhibit the same essential phases. The ancient philosophy, centuries ago, ran the same mad career, from simple faith in God and immortality, to Atheistic Materialism, and universal unbelief; from these to Oriental Pantheism, and mystical devotion. Modern philosophy closed the last century with the same atheistic sensuality, and universal scepticism. How should it commence the present, but with a renovated Platonism, and the transcendental philosophy? And where could it terminate its career, but in a fully developed Pantheism, and a return to monkish piety? Let Alexandria and Oxford answer. But, in looking forward to the future, may we not look with hope, since the enemies now to be fought are old foes, well known, and twice routed?

The next step in the progress of human improvement, was the incursion of the Northern barbarians, and the overthrow of the Roman empire. Let us not be deceived by the tears that poetry may weep over this "niobe of the nations," or dazzled by the gorgeous drapery which a false rhetoric may cast over the putrid carcass of this dead queen of the world. Did not the blood of slaughtered millions cry aloud for vengeance? Did not the crushed rights of a subjugated and down-trodden world, plead for retribution? Did not the

stench of her own fathomless pollution, smell rank to heaven? At any rate, what had Rome further to do for mankind? Had she not finished her work? A few hardy shepherds had met and founded a city, and called it Rome, or strength. Her strength lay in the barbaric virtues of her first inhabitants. She gradually subdued, consolidated, and civilized the surrounding tribes; received the departing sceptre of the Greek empire, Greek learning, and Greek tongue; and with her universal dominion, universal language, and universal peace, had prepared the way for the coming of that universal Lord, whom her own oracles predicted, her own poets mysteriously sang, and her own senators ignorantly hoped to crown in Rome. Her name was no longer *Rome*; her strength had departed along with the early virtues from which it sprang. The luxuries and vices of the conquered nations streamed in upon her from every side, and avenged their wrongs. The spoils of plundered empires rotted on her bosom. The very religion which was sent to save mankind, she had robbed of its purity, and thus shorn of its strength. Her bishops, elected by bribery or by force, wallowed in luxury and obscenity; and her temples were stained with the blood of contending factions. Pampered mistress of the world, her huge, bloated frame, was stretched over half the globe, and the disease that festered at the heart, was poured in poisoned currents, through all the extremities. Shall she not die? Yes. "*For how shall she be quickened, unless she perish first?*" In her case, how wonderful the exemplification of that universal law, by which death is only the harbinger of a glorious resurrection; disso-

lution **must** precede a reconstruction; the termination of the old is the commencement of the new! Let a bolder and better race dash down from their forests, and with their strong arms and brave hearts, sweep away this mass of putrefaction, that taints the air and plagues the race. And let us see if from this new soil, and with these better influences, there shall not spring up a higher, nobler, purer, in *every way*, a more desirable state of society, than Rome or Greece have ever witnessed. If not, then let us say that there is no progress in human affairs; let us lift up our wailings along with the blind worshipper of Rome's power, and exclaim with him,—

"Alas for Earth! for we shall never see  
That brightness in her eye she wore, when Rome was free!"

But living as we do in this land of regulated freedom and christian faith; looking *around* with gratitude upon the purer morals, and more diffused intelligence of modern times—and *forward*, with well grounded hope, to the world's complete regeneration, may we not exultingly exclaim, what a far different brightness shall beam from the world's eye, what a nobler radiance shall illuminate the world's whole face, when all that prophecy has predicted, and all that hope may now reasonably anticipate, shall be finally accomplished; when Religion and Liberty shall walk forth, hand in hand, over the whole field of human society; Religion, erect in her own native independence, her shackles knocked off by Freedom; liberty purified, restrained, exalted by the pure principles of religion; liberty, giving to all man's physical and intellectual energies, their fullest develop-

ment and most active exercise; religion, exalting his moral nature to the throne of its rightful supremacy, rejoicing in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, linking earth to heaven, and binding with a golden chain, the destinies of men and nations to the throne of God! The Northern nations, at any rate, poured down and buried under their deluge, all the remains of Roman and Grecian art, polity, religion, learning; and in burying, preserved them—preserved, for a future resurrection and a nobler use; and it is from this wild chaos of all that was old, mingled with all that was new, that we behold emerging, at length, the *New World of modern times*, fresh and green, from its submersion—vigorous from its repose—rich in the long-buried treasures now at length revealed, and richer still in that new alluvial soil which was left behind, after the subsidence of its waters. The civilization of Greece and Rome, along with its attendant vices, was swept away; yet the noblest products—the most stupendous monuments of that civilization, were preserved, to educate all coming generations. Even that very philosophy which sprang up, as its legitimate, and perhaps only possible product, in the exhausted mind of the ancient world, was preparing unconsciously for the coming catastrophe. Had no man, under the influence of this vague Orientalism, sought purity of the heart by seclusion from the world, there had been no monasteries: had there been no monasteries, where had been the sanctuaries of retreat and security, for the profane and sacred learning of past ages,—for the Classics, the Christian Fathers, the Holy Scriptures? Yet, by one of those manifold relations, which almost all things

bear to all in God's comprehensive plan, this philosophy was doomed to die, along with the mystic piety it nourished, by the very literature it preserved, and the very Bible which it revered, but did not study. The revival of learning was a necessary, (or to avoid all offence arising from the use of a doubtful term,) by all means a *certain* thing, though many collateral and independent causes combined to hasten its period, and modify its character. It is not important for my purpose, to trace its progress or to mark its well-known auxiliaries, the invention of printing, and the influx of exiled Greeks, after the fall of Constantinople. When the mind of the world awoke, it awoke at once (as in all healthy developments it must) to all human interests alike,—to commerce, to religion, to freedom; but with that sure instinct which, *in all ages*, has *marked* man as destined for immortality; and with an eager intensity of earnestness, commensurate with the vast importance of the interests involved, to the great subject of religion. Hence, the *third great* era in the progress of modern society, was the reformation of religion. It were a most childish view of this great event, to consider it a mere contest about dogmas,—*even the most important*,—as the angry conflict of opposing sects; or even as a question in which only religion was concerned. It was an event involving all human interests, and in which universal man was concerned; it was the mind of man expanding in all directions—waking from the sleep of ages, and welcoming the light from every quarter, and on every subject; out-growing the bonds that had fettered it, and bursting them—not bursting them that he might be free, but, by the expanding

force of his own enlarging powers, those bonds were burst, and he remained, by a necessary consequence, free—free to think, to speak, to act. It was called a *religious* reformation, because *religion* was the mighty principle that stirred the master-minds of that awakening age; religious rights were those most highly valued, and most cruelly assailed; and above all, because, (as history too well attests,) in all great struggles for the welfare of mankind—where peril must be dared, and sufferings endured, and success is doubtful—it is religious principle alone, which has ever nerved men for the conflict, and sustained them through it.

But this awakening was not of the ancient Roman mind which, even in its glory, had received, with servile acquiescence, the teachings of the subtler Greek; but, of the harder intellect of those rude Northern barbarians, whose noblest representatives remain in the great Teutonic race—in the Saxon and Anglo-Saxon branches of that race. Hence it is remarkable, that the first and most decisive act of this awakening mind, was to revolt against the Greek and Oriental Philosophies, as vehemently as against the established faith; and Luther, one of the noblest specimens of that mind, denounces as bitterly as he does the Pope himself, that Greek philosophy, which, in its two-fold form, meditative and dialectic,—became the source of the scholastic logic and scholastic piety; and throws himself boldly back, on God's Bible, and man's common sense.

Thus, this characteristic element of the new civilization, at last, after many struggles with ignorance and imaginary wisdom, has gained over one class of Northern minds, a decided preponderance, if not an abso-

lute supremacy; and, walking hand in hand with Liberty and advancing Knowledge, or rather giving life to both, has become the guiding influence in every benevolent advance of the human mind—in every successful struggle for liberty and happiness, throughout the world. But in this resurrection of the mind, the Bible, though the principal, was not the only agent. The ancient Classics awoke again, and smiled at an ignorant and stupid superstition. The early Roman freedom roused many hearts, and sounded an alarm against all despotism; but above all, against that insatiable lust of power which aimed to encompass the globe itself, and fetter the free thoughts, as well as the bodies of mankind. While, throughout Catholic Europe, the Bible was suppressed, classical literature was allowed; and the social development has proceeded in spite of ecclesiastical tyranny, under the latter influence. The tendency of any given progress, is not seen at once, but is measured by its ultimate results, and the great crises it produces. That social development, over which the Bible was permitted to exercise the largest influence, presented, as its earliest product, (the earnest of a still richer and nobler harvest,) the revolutions of 1688 and 1776. Its antagonist must point to that of 1789. In that event, it was at last perceived, that the old elements could only produce the old results. The Gallic race, that had yielded so often to the Roman arms, adopted likewise the ancient opinions. An Epicurean Atheism,—materialistic, sensual, ferocious,—was universally diffused; every vice that had marked the last ages of Roman degeneracy, was witnessed again; all the horrors that in Rome had spread over slow cen-

turies of gradual putrefaction, seemed concentrated, by reason of the more universal diffusion of the poison, into a few bitter years of intensest agony; and by that rigid and terrible uniformity, which has ever presided over the course of human affairs, the French people, who had decreed that there should be no Ruler in heaven, and no dominion upon earth, except their own; took refuge from the horrors of their own misrule, in a military despotism, and found another Cæsar to love, to flatter, and to rule the people.

This was the fourth great era in human progress, and may be styled the **IRRELIGIOUS REFORMATION**. It has been ridiculed, as being founded on the Gospel, according to Jean Jacques Rousseau. Perhaps its stupidity lay here,—that men who talked perpetually of progress, and abused the dark ages, should have hoped to remedy human ills by returning to a system which had rotted out, more than a thousand years before, and rendered the dark ages necessary, as a refuge from its horrors. When the stunned world awoke from the shock of that terrible concussion, behold, all men saw that a new era had commenced, and was in rapid progress! Of this revolution, so much has been idly spoken, that one almost hesitates to speak of it at all. Yet thus much may at least be said: The indiscretion of kings and ministers—disordered finances—a luxurious court—a people suffering from scarcity of food—might precipitate and modify, but not produce it. And he who does not see in the present day, that its causes lay far back in history—deep down amidst the foundations—imbedded in the whole structure of society, may be safely left to enjoy his own opinions, as beyond

the reach of instruction or of argument. Nor is it any thing better than a mere puerile avoiding of the question, to pretend that the enormities which signalized and characterized that revolution, were mere occasional attendants. They were, in truth, distinguishing features—inseparable and essential parts of that great convulsion—the necessary and well-known results of similar principles in all time. For the second time, human society had developed itself fully—had passed from the lowest barbarism to the highest civilization; human life was variously, brilliantly, even to a painful excess, illuminated, polished—expanded in every direction—in arts, in science, in elegant refinement. For a second time, this civilization had landed in universal atheism, debauchery, selfishness, and blood; and, for a second time, the human race, weary of their experiment, turned with heavy and anxious hearts, to the new principles which he who made the heart, had revealed, as the only guide of individual and social improvement. The monarchs of the world, especially the powerful rulers of Northern and Middle Europe, Frederick William of Prussia, and the Emperor Alexander of Russia, proclaimed the Bible as the foundation of all social order. The people of England acknowledged it as their preserver from anarchy and civil war; and even France confessed, that her people were "*en bruti*"; that instead of exalting, they had only brutalized the nation; and that nothing but christian education could repair the social ruin.

Behold the nations starting on a new career of improvement, and welcoming, with eager joy, the dawn of a new and happier era! That some such wide-spread

and beneficent revolution, is indeed at hand, might be argued from the extent and intensity of this universal expectation. However the fact may be explained, it is nevertheless indisputably true, that a similar phenomenon has preceded, and fore-shadowed, and thus prepared the great revolutions of former times. One need only cast a hasty glance over the broad field of universal history, and his eye is immediately arrested by successive periods, in which the general mind was deeply stirred—tremulously, almost preternaturally alive to coming events, startled at the shadows they cast before; or grasping, with eager expectation, their promised blessings. Such a period preceded the coming of the Savior—the fall of Jerusalem—most distinctly, and for several generations, the overthrow of the Roman empire—the reformation of religion—and in later days, the French revolution; and no one, conversant in the slightest degree with the writers of these several eras, can have failed to mark with astonishment, how the human mind, under the guidance of prophecy, or old tradition, or the impulse of events, has swept forward beyond the impetus of the force that first propelled it, and *vaguely*, yet *confidently* and *marvellously* divined the future. And is there not, even now, just such an universal movement? Amidst the alternate play of sunshine and of storm, upon the bosom of the world's great deep, may we not behold the silent, but mighty swell of its whole mass of waters, moved from their lowest depths by some mysterious influence, and hastening on to herald its arrival? Is there not a vague consciousness of changes, about to come upon the earth; an universal hope; each man promising to

himself, and to his neighbor, the approach of a millennium—political, moral, religious, social, physical—of whatever kind,—yet, by all means, a millennium; relief from all pressing evil, the enjoyment of all desirable good? That men's varying characters and desires, should vary the coloring of the picture they have drawn; that men's varying temperaments should make it more or less remote—should leave it indefinite, or precisely fix its date, was of course to be expected. The wonder is, that amidst all this variety of character, creed, opinion, education, temperament—the infidel, the christian, the enthusiast, the phlegmatic, the ignorant, the cultivated, the scholar in his studious retirement,—the statesman, on the world's large, busy theatre; upon this one point all are agreed, that some great, fundamental, universally beneficent change, is about to pass over human affairs.

Precisely the same universality of expectation, with a correspondent diversity as to the thing expected, prevailed just before the advent of the Savior. Some expected a temporal deliverance,—others, a spiritual redemption. The general expectation turned vaguely towards the East, as his birth-place. The Romans, at successive periods, fixed upon Julius Cæsar, and Vespasian, as the promised deliverer. The Jews alone knew, that he should spring from the seed of David, and be born at Bethlehem of Judea; yet made him sovereign of a nation, instead of Lord of the world. From whatever source, then, this joyful anticipation may be derived, or on whatever principles explained, its universality, at least proves it to be deeply grounded; and the example of former changes, authorizes us to hail it

as the precursor, and perhaps, the preparation of the coming era. And does it not add strength to the argument, when we find that beyond the limits of Christendom, there prevails an expectation just as strong, though precisely the reverse; that over the wide extent of the Mahometan empire, is thrown the shadow of a gloomy tradition, which, existing at once as cause and effect, amidst their recent discomfitures, teaches, that the religion of the False Prophet, along with the despotism it sustains, are soon to disappear; and thus one of the mightiest barriers be removed from the path of human improvement.

But again: Side by side with this general expectation,—deepening, widening, strengthening along with it, alternately communicating and receiving support,—is a wide-spread, almost universal preparation. No great revolution in human affairs, extensively and beneficially affecting the interests of the race,—no mighty impulse communicated to the progress of human society,—has proceeded from a single cause, but has ever been the conjoint result of many separate and independent forces, harmoniously co-operating for the accomplishment of one common object.

Those who have observed the phenomena, and analyzed the elements of whirlwinds, assure us, that it is not a single wind, blowing in a given direction with extraordinary force; but all the winds of the heavens, rushing from every quarter of the sky, concentrating all their forces on a single point, and moving on together in the direct line of the storm, that gives to the tornado that terrific and overwhelming energy, with which it sweeps over land and sea, and prostrates every barrier

that would retard its progress. Even so, those great moral and social revolutions, which sometimes sweep over the world with the sublime and awful grandeur—the fearful rapidity and irresistible energy of whirlwinds,—are traceable, not to any single cause alone, but to various disconnected and mutually independent causes; which, moving from remote and even opposite quarters of the heavens, and attracted by some secret and inexplicable sympathy, converge towards a common point, and march forward in one common line of operation. For, this is the method of God's providence, as all history attests. When he has some great plan to accomplish, he makes a correspondent preparation; arranges from a distance, the forces that shall advance it; lays far back in history, and deep down among the hidden elements of things, the springs that shall move it forward; and when the hour arrives, behold, all things conspire towards the designed result! From unexpected, and even hostile sources, stream favorable influences. The gay and polished wit of Erasmus, must aid the keen logic of Calvin; and the coarse, yet powerful denunciations of Luther, in carrying on the Reformation. The ambition and licentiousness of Henry VIII, and the literary voluptuousness of Leo X, are just as effectual as the humble piety of the devout Reformer. The Catholic Princes must check each other, till the cause is beyond their power; the Turk must appear once more in Europe, to divert the trembling Council of Nuremberg from the rising heresy; nay, the very "stars in their courses fight against Sisera;" the trained elements engage in the conflict, and the Invincible Armada is wrecked on the coast it

was destined to ravage. What relation has the fall of Constantinople in the East, to the invention of printing in the West? What connection has either, with the discovery of America, or the invention of the compass? And how is either of the latter events related to the reformation of religion? Yet given as a problem to be solved, the widest possible extension of knowledge and freedom, and the transplanting of both, along with pure religion, to a new and unoccupied soil; and is it not easy to perceive how all these independent events must occur almost contemporaneously, or in quick succession? It is this inexplicable coincidence of independent events,—this strange co-operation of unrelated, and even hostile powers,—this convergence of remote and mutually repellent forces on a single point, which manifests a Providential purpose and insures the certainty of the event.

Is there, then, visible in the world at present, such a convergence of separate forces towards any single point, towards a new and happier state of human society,—in which the Bible, with the other great elements of our modern civilization, shall more widely and more thoroughly pervade and mould the general mind? Most manifestly.

1st. The altered tone of science, and the almost universal diffusion of the Bible. We have already alluded to the amazing re-action which immediately succeeded the revolution in France. It was the recoil of the human mind, from the atrocities that marked its progress, and the military despotism, which *darkly* overshadowed its close. But this recoil was not only from the atrocities which disgraced it—but, by a natural and

legitimate process, from the principles which engendered them, and the whole method, and habit of thought, in which these principles originated. Hence it extended over the whole field of human thought, and human interests, and reached even those abstruser inquiries, which lie most remote from the influence of political events. It is not too much to say, that the whole spirit of physical investigation has been revolutionized in the present century; and that, whatever may be its other defects, the stupid Atheistic Materialism of the last century, has almost totally disappeared.— While each new investigation has revealed new wonders in the creation around us, each fresh discovery has only given new attestation to the existence and the attributes of God; so that, were not dead absurdities endowed with the strange faculty of indefinite transmigration, one might safely proclaim the revival of scientific Atheism—a logical impossibility. But the same discoveries which have rendered intelligent Atheism almost impossible, have rendered still more certain the overthrow of every existing form of superstition, which, founded on the ignorance of mankind, and appealing to well understood phenomena, as evidence of miraculous powers, must *necessarily* disappear with the advancing light of natural science. In the mean time, while these two extremes of Atheism and superstition, are destined to a certain overthrow, from calculable causes; the Bible, as the only authoritative exposition of the character of God, and the destinies of man, has attracted universal attention, and secured an intensity of interest, and extent of circulation, unparalleled at any former time, or by any product of human

genius. Amidst the convulsions which attended the departure of the former era, and ushered in the present, awoke the spirit of renewed devotion to the Bible, and active zeal in its circulation. And, as if at once to stimulate, and assist this awakening zeal of the christian world, there was immediately placed in their hands an improved instrument of power, discovered indeed twelve years before, yet lying in abeyance and undisclosed, till reviving christian faith demanded, and could guide its energies. The art of Printing, the mightiest instrument and most distinguishing characteristic of our modern civilization, though known for centuries in its simple elements, to the Chinese and the Romans, was reserved, till the race was ready to employ it to be the Herald, and then the Handmaid of the Reformation. By a Providence equally manifest, and no less amazing, the greatest enlargement of its powers, multiplying them near fifty-fold by the application of steam, was reserved for the very period when, for the first time, they could be successfully employed for the real benefit of mankind. In 1814, two years before the establishment of the American Bible Society, only two hundred and fifty impressions of any printed work, could be made in an hour. Now, twelve thousand, by the best London presses; and in consequence, sixteen folio pages, containing ninety-six columns, equal to six small volumes, may be bought for five pence. Thus, as the stars know their season, and the sun knoweth the hour of his rising and going down, and all the great worlds above us, move on “unresting, yet unhaunting,”—even so did this greatest of modern improvements await its destined hour, and then, behold! thirty

millions of Bibles and Testaments, in one hundred and fifty different languages, and diffused over three-quarters of the Globe.

Now, let it be remembered, that all political institutions, and social organizations, are but external products of the forces at work within; the outward growth of an inward life—not the living animal itself, but the shell that encloses it—sprung from its substance, and still clinging to it, till shaken off by that convulsive shudder, which marks at once the termination of the old, and the commencement of a new development: And, it will be understood at once, that the past, present, and prospective influence of thirty millions of Bibles, scattered over the whole Globe, and in all languages, is not to be estimated by the outward effects already visible, but by the inward tendencies, ripening and struggling forward towards their visible and tangible results. In this view, there is not in the whole compass of printed works, a document of such interest—so pregnant with unutterable thoughts to an intelligent mind, believing or unbelieving, as the Report of the Languages and Lands, in which the English and American Bible Societies have diffused, and, with rapidly increasing zeal and facilities, are still diffusing the Holy Scriptures. Read it. It contains languages and dialects of which you never heard—Provinces and almost Empires, with millions of men, whose very existence you had scarcely dreamed of. In most of these, the Bible is the first printed book. It precedes and prepares the way for the sciences, and arts, and polity, of civilized and christian men; and must be the principal and governing element in their future civilization.

Indeed, one can scarcely admire enough, the wisdom of that Providential arrangement, or the sublimity of that noble scheme, by which the humble missionary, with his Bible in his hand, goes forth to lay the foundations of new Empires,—to pour the elements of thought into unborn millions of minds,—and thus to mould, by an unnoticed energy, the future destinies of the race.

2d. This leads us to observe, that the whole course of human affairs, tends to give to this element of civilization, an universal extension. There is a mutual sympathy, intense and all-pervading, though often unperceived, between all human interests and all possible truths. Knowledge is inseparably linked with freedom; liberty is inseparably connected with virtue; virtue dependent on truth; and permanent prosperity and power indissolubly related to each. Hence, throughout the world, the progress of freedom and general knowledge, is the measure of national prosperity, and power; and each is conditioned by the advance of virtuous principle. Of the nations of the globe, the unchristian are the barbarous,—the barbarous are the weak,—and among the nations professedly christian, all the elements of national prosperity, and happiness, and power, are proportioned to the extension and intensity of Bible principles. Compare the Heathen and Mahometan powers of the world, with the Catholic States of Europe; compare these again with Protestant Nations,—Italy and Spain, with England, Scotland, and Prussia, in the Old World; South America, with the United States, in the New; and mark the immeasurable superiority of the latter, in every element of power and expansion,—in knowledge, in wealth, in freedom, in en-

terprise, in general intelligence. Three centuries ago, Italy was the centre of intelligence; and Spain, the home of empire; Scotland was a semi-barbarous land of wild hills, and an uncultivated population; and England played only a secondary part on the theatre of European politics; while North and South America, both recently discovered, were commencing together, with the advantage all in favor of the South, their career of social improvement. Now, your own thoughts will readily suggest the painful contrast, and recognize the invariable principle. By the manifest and irresistible progress of events, all power is passing rapidly from the unchristian to the christian nations; and to these in the precise proportion of their disposition, and their power, to diffuse the principles of the Bible. Instead of one great empire, as in the days of our Savior, covering a large portion of the globe,—restraining the barbarous tribes by the terror of her name, and extending the broad ægis of her protection over every Roman citizen, so that he might travel securely in the most distant land, as the herald of salvation,—we behold a far more colossal power arrayed for its protection and diffusion. Three mighty empires professing the christian religion,—allowing, nay encouraging the spread of the Gospel,—each greater in extent and power than Rome at the summit of her glory,—embracing the largest part of the territory, all the power, and most of the civilization, wealth and influence of the world. France has already seized the North of Africa; Russia occupies the whole North-East of Europe, and North-West of Asia, and is advancing by a gradual, yet certain progress, towards the centre of that great continent.

Already, within the last few years, her armies have twice advanced almost to the gates of Constantinople. The desponding Turk grasps with a trembling hand, a falling sceptre, and awaits, with a gloomy fatalism, the final dissolution of the empire; while, in every sea, through every climate, on every continent, England has a dominion such as the world never saw before, including four millions five hundred thousand miles square of territory,—three-fold that of Rome in her highest glory, which never exceeded one million six hundred thousand; with an expansive energy at home, that continually demands new outlets; enlarging her borders by annual accessions of territory, and pushing forward, towards an indefinite extension. She has founded an immense empire in America; is peopling Australasia; has one hundred and fifty millions of subjects in India; and though for twenty years, all men have predicted her speedy ruin, yet every year has seen new additions to her power. A broadside from her fleet at Navarino, emancipated Greece; a shot from her steam-ship at St. Jean D'Acres, dismantled a fortress hitherto deemed impregnable, and decided the fate of Egypt. With four thousand troops, she has routed the forces of the Celestial empire, and laid the foundation of a new dominion in China. And what an immense empire do we behold rising *here!* stretching over this great valley,—greater than those of the Euphrates and the Nile united,—sweeping towards the Western mountains, and already bursting its way into South America, there to plant new Anglo-Saxon nations,—diffuse the arts, the language, and the institutions of civilized and christian men, and by an inevita-

ble process, either elevate the mongrel races now wandering and battling there, or, by their own expansive energy, overgrow, displace, and supersede them!

This very extension of great empires, with its attendant extent of manifold connections, must so blend the whole race together, that all shall partake a common movement, and share a common destiny. The accumulation of large empires, like the mustering of mighty armies, has always indicated, and prepared for, great and extensive changes. Immense masses brought under the same government, subjected to the same laws, fighting in the same armies, sailing in the same vessels, reading the same books, and cherishing the same interests, ultimately, however various their habits, religion, politics, lose their mutual repulsion; attract each other from their very proximity; become homogeneous, and melt into a common mass pervaded by a common character; and this character, not a compound of all the commingled elements, but the predominant character of the *ascendant* power. Thus the various tribes of Italy, and then the successive nations of Europe, melted into one great Roman empire; and under our own eyes, to-day, English, Scotch, German, French, Pole,—all are merged into one great American community, pervaded by one ascendant American character. Whilst these great empires are thus uniting, and harmonizing the elements of which they are composed, the extended commerce of our times, advancing daily with accelerating impetus, and already stretching her arms over the globe, is gathering them into one great family of nations. How much still remains to be accomplished by this omnipresent agent, will appear from

the fact, that six years ago, there was scarcely a rail-road on the continent of Europe, and not a steam-ship on the Atlantic ocean. How rapidly it will effect its conquests, is manifest from this—that now, scarcely a civilized nation, but is threading her territories with rail-roads; and the steam-ships ply on the waters of the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Indus, the Ganges, and the Niger. What say we to the stage-line, now sweeping from Cairo to Suez, “with provisions and refreshments, supplied at a reasonable rate, in the Desert?” What shall we say, when the steam-car shall awaken the echoes of the Arabian wilderness; and the net-work of innumerable rail-roads shall overspread the whole fair region, from the Euphrates to the Ægean? And this shall certainly occur, within the life-time of some now present; as certainly as savage nations must adopt the arts and customs of civilized men, or give way before them. Nor can the decaying despotism of modern Turkey, oppose a stronger barrier to the progress of European energy, than the savage tribes upon our border, to the onward current of our Western population.

Now, what is the effect of this extending commerce, and increasing intimacy of connection? Is it not gradual assimilation in all things,—the gradual progress of the stronger, and retrogression of the weak? Already, Turkey and Egypt are adopting the arts of christian Europe; their armies are drilled by christian officers—their manufactories directed by christian superintendents, their improvements, by European engineers, their schools instructed in European learning. Their settled religious policy is revolutionized. Mahomet was the apostle of persecution—God’s last prophet, sent to ac-

complish by the sword, what Moses and Christ could not accomplish by persuasion. Remember, this was the avowed, the prominent, the distinctive characteristic of his religion. Now, the religion of Christ is not merely tolerated, but honored; its Missionaries, every where protected, and its Bishops installed in the Holy City. Not only in Mahometan countries, but throughout the world, do we find the gradual melting away of obstacles to human improvement. Wherever christian commerce, arts, or arms extend, there the superiority of christians, is, to the natives, the superiority of christianity. Hence, Knowledge, Science, and Religion, march *hand in hand* around the earth. Old governments, old customs, old religions, give way *together*; because *all alike* depend for continuance, on the ignorance and degradation of their advocates; and the religion of civilized men, *alone*, is found capable of harmonizing with all the other truths, which advancing civilization develops. Hence, the Barbarian Chief, from Central Africa, comes, with his hundred bullocks, to procure a Christian Teacher for his wild tribe. The Sandwich Islanders receive, with outstretched arms and hearty welcome, the first Christian Missionaries that land upon their shores. Whole villages in India, renounce, with one accord, the religion of their fathers. And there is no false religion, throughout the world, that is not, at the present hour, superannuated—effete—leaning for temporary support, upon some obvious falsehood in science, or some hateful despotism; and destined, of course, to disappear before the advance of liberty and knowledge.

3d. *All the causes of past advancement*, are ope-

rating with continued and increasing power—*all those of retardation*, with diminished and rapidly diminishing energy. The changes which are now going on around us, we rarely notice; we are ourselves moving on with the advancement of the times, and cannot calculate our progress; we are whirling on, with the great globe on which we live, partaking its motions, and unconscious of its revolutions; and it is only when we look back upon some distant point in the past, that we perceive the mighty interval which we have travelled, and that every moment has been indeed a moment of progress. Yet, how vast the difference between the savage and civilized man, in comfort, in dignity, in freedom, in all the elements of intellectual, moral, and social enjoyment! How amazing the progress, from the feudal bondage,—the border wars,—the mingled revelry of wine and blood,—the universal ignorance and degradation of the people,—the gloomy fanaticism and lordly tyranny of the Priesthood, in the middle ages,—to the corresponding relations of society, in modern times! Now, examine the causes of this progress, and it will be found that each is, not only existing now, but in full operation—increasing in quantity, in energy, in hope, in all the elements of progress,—nay, that each, in its onward advancement, has gained a new momentum from the impetus of its own movements,—has cleared the path for its future progress,—has even turned the hostile batteries, which it has stormed, into fortresses of strength, that command, and protect the line of its future march. Has printing diffused knowledge abroad, and thus elevated the great masses to intelligence and virtue? Her blessings are every day widening, and cheapening; her publications more ra-

pid, more various, more accessible. Scarcely a year passes, which does not reveal some fresh invention, to increase, and to diffuse the almost boundless power of this great engine of human improvement; and already, in every civilized country, there has arisen a third estate, (a corps of able writers,) stronger than both the other, moulding them insensibly to its purposes; and, in great part, creating both Lords and Commons. Has increasing education, diffused the benefit of printing? Has commerce extended the knowledge of all lands, and thus transplanted into all, whatever is best in the natural products, or the institutions of the most favored nations? Has the more equal diffusion of property and knowledge, both prepared and excited men to be free? Has freedom of inquiry,—questioning all claims, and sparing only what would bear the test of the keenest scrutiny,—cleared away the rubbish which centuries had heaped upon the most sacred truths, to obscure and crush them? Behold, each of these is rapidly widening the circle, and deepening the intensity of its influence. Education, once the exclusive privilege of a small and favored class, is now the heritage of the race. It has passed into the farmhouse and mechanic's shop, and is passing on to the obscurest hovel and remotest nook of our land. Commerce, once a convenience, is now an absolute necessity of our race; and each increase in population—in productive skill or power—in the knowledge or command of the elements around us, increases the necessity, and widens the range of her multitudinous operations. While the acquisition of knowledge and property, alike open for all, is at once cheap and easy; and freedom of inquiry unfettered, and all-pervading as the

air we breathe, is often, when resisted for a moment, overwhelming as the storm. And, while these battlers for human improvement are moving forward with renewed impetus, and enlarging forces,—glowing with hope, and flushed with victory,—the hostile array is weakening daily. Indeed, these two propositions may be considered almost identical, since in such a conflict, each captive is converted into a soldier, and at once strengthens the assailants, and weakens the defence. For, what is the progress of light, truth, knowledge, freedom, but the decline of their opposites? What the triumph of the one, but the other's defeat? Hence, on every side, we behold general dissatisfaction with the present; all eyes turned with hope and desire,—vague, yet intense, unquenchable—towards the future. Spain, with her Cortes, arrayed against the Pope,—Presbytery, in Scotland, once more in arms against the Monarchy,—Gaunt Hunger, and Grim Despair, prowling through the streets of England, and significantly asking, “Are not *we men* too?—or, *Lords and Bishops*, are they *sole* heirs and proprietors of God's world?” On one side, we hear the bursting of the bonds that bind society together,—the heaving up of the deep foundations, on which our present social order rests; on another, the suppressed tones of gloomy and bitter defiance, from innumerable voices—the murmur of the distant winds, as they gather to the storm,—the low wailing of all the elements, which precedes the earthquake.

But, “when shall these things be? When shall this anticipated consummation be attained?” A question too often lightly asked, and presumptuously answered. “It is not for us to know the times, or the sea-

sons, which the Father hath put in his own power." "Of that day and hour, knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven." We are not of those who believe that the study of Prophecy, can communicate the gift of Inspiration; nor, do we suppose that the symbolic language of Daniel and John, like the symbols of an algebraic equation, can be calculated with mathematical precision. In full view, however, of the past and the present, and judging from the analogy of former revolutions, the remark may, perhaps, be hazarded,—that, when measured on the large scale of Universal History,—when compared to the life-time of Nations, or the duration of former great eras, the period *must be short,—very short.* It is true, all great social revolutions must progress slowly. For three centuries and a half, was the first great struggle prolonged. An equal, or greater length of time elapsed, before the first distinct gleams of light burst, in the days of Charlemagne, over the chaos of barbarism; and double that period, before the struggling rays of Truth, gleaming irregularly forth from amidst darkness and oppression, at last illumined the world in the days of Luther. But, from that day to this, *all things move faster.* There is a freer play,—a wider sweep of all forces,—a greater accumulation of power,—a more rapid march of events. In 1538, was the suppression of the greater Monasteries, by the most despotic of English kings; in 1688, after the lapse of one hundred and fifty years, we meet the great Revolution, which has secured the civil and religious liberties of England. In less than ninety years, we behold a still nobler revolution; for, in 1776, is the Declaration of American Independence. Behold, how rapidly all things are ripening! Let fifty

years elapse, and now where are we? Within that half century have occurred more extraordinary events, more rapid and radical changes, than in two hundred and fifty years preceding. Two French Revolutions; South American Independence; Greek Emancipation; final humiliation of the Turk; and, two new Empires sprung into being; Protestant Prussia at the head of the great Germanic Confederacy; and Protestant America, in the lead of the free nations of the world.

So vast are the materials accumulated, and accumulating still, for that final Revolution; so manifold the influences at work, to hasten its arrival; so silent, yet so rapid and irresistible its onward progress, that human intellect cannot pretend to measure its advance, or calculate its period. It will burst upon mankind, perhaps, when least expected; as the electricity, which has silently ascended in the mountain mist, or, in the gentle evaporation of the morning dew, bursts from the cloud, where it has slumbered long, in deafening thunder.

But if it *may* be soon, it *must* be terrific. *Former eras* have borne long, in silence; have travailed in agony, and brought forth in *tears and blood.* Nor can this be an exception. The change *must be radical, universal, subversive*, pervading society through all its ramifications—affecting all human opinions, prejudices, interests, prescriptive powers, and vested rights. Hence, every human passion must be embarked in the conflict,—men's virtues as well as vices,—their deep convictions, their settled habits, their hopes, their fears, for time and for eternity,—will all be arrayed in the attack and the defence. A war of opinion,—obstinate, fanatical, exterminating. The struggle will be,

not for mastery, but for existence. In that final conflict, as all human interests will be involved, so, probably, the *nations* of the earth will be combatants, in different divisions and on different ground; yet as fragments of the same "*Grande Armee*," and on the battle-field of the Globe. When all human passions, and human interests, are thus thrown loose, to dash against each other in terrible concussion; what wonder if the Earth should exhibit one Universal French Revolution, and the World, for the third and last time,

"Get drunk on blood to vomit crime!"

Nor, does this supposition cast the slightest shadow of doubt over the ultimate result. Nay, it is the rapid progress of truth, and holiness, and freedom, which shall arouse the embittered opposition it is destined to surmount. The sluggish craft,—dragged slowly and painfully along, against the current, while her wearied crew, with aid of clumsy oars and heavy poles, projecting roots and overhanging boughs, ply lazily their toilsome task,—scarce forms a ripple on the face of the smooth waters. But, mark the majestic ship, as she sweeps across the sea, while wind and steam combine to speed her flight. The billows are piled up before her; the foaming surge is dashed, boiling, behind her, and on either side; but we fear not for her safety. The opposing waters that are heaped about her prow—the agitation of the elements around—are but the evidence and the measure of her speed. The power above her, and within, that could drive those waves before her prow, and pile them in her path-way, can lift her above their fury.

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